

METHODS AND APPARATUSES FOR PRESENTING A COLLECTION OF DIGITAL MEDIA IN A MEDIA CONTAINER

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to methods and apparatuses for providing a user interface for using a collection of digital media in a digital processing system.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The creation and editing of electronic documents on digital processing systems, such as computer systems, has allowed users of such systems to create elaborate and creative documents. One obstacle to the use of such systems is the interface between the user and the computer system. This interface, often referred to as a user interface, is sometimes so difficult to understand and/or to use that only relatively trivial electronic documents can be created and edited by a typical user.

Graphical user interfaces are typically easier to use than command line user interfaces. As a result, graphical user interfaces have proliferated on computer systems. Such interfaces provide different types of views to the user. For example, one view which is commonly available from document processing software is a "page view" which typically shows a full view of a complete page of a document. This view is different from what may be considered to be a magnified view showing only a portion of a page. Thus, if a page contains several objects, such as several different digital images on one page, the magnified view may only show one or two such images, whereas the page view would show all the images on the page.

Another conventional method used in graphical user interfaces involves miniaturized images which represent a page. These miniaturized images are often referred to as "thumbnails." An example of these thumbnails may be found in certain computer programs, such as ClarisWorks from Apple Computer, Inc. These thumbnail views of a page are presented to a user when the user desires to open an existing document to either view the document or edit the document. Typically, a dialog box is displayed to the user, and this dialog box includes a listing of available, existing documents which may be viewed using the program. By selecting one of the documents, a thumbnail image of the document may be made to appear in the dialog box. This allows the user to verify that the document is the document which the user desired to view. This is often useful in cases where the file name for the document does not tell the user the content of the file (e.g. because the user forgot the file name which was used to store the document). This thumbnail image is also often referred to as a preview image. That is, it allows the user to preview the image before actually opening the full page of the document.

Often, a page of a document will have multiple objects, such as digital images, on the page. Typically, these multiple objects are placed on the page through manual interaction between the user and the computer system. For example, the user may select several different objects and cause them to be placed on the page. While this is often desirable in many cases, it does not allow the user to automatically create a collection of documents which may be desirable in certain cases.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention discloses methods and apparatuses for presenting a collection of digital media in a media

container. A method in one example of the invention displays in a first region a page of a media container. The page is capable of displaying at least one visual representation of a digital media on the page. The page has a position in the first region which is capable of displaying an image of a first visual representation. The first visual representation is displayed in a second region while displaying the page in the first region. The position in the first region is capable of displaying the image after a dragging operation is performed from the first visual representation in the second region to the position.

In one particular embodiment of the present invention, the media container is a picture album. A page from the picture album is displayed in the first region and thumbnail versions of pictures are displayed in the second region. A thumbnail version may be dragged from the second region to the page in order to place an image represented by the thumbnail onto the page. The dragging operation comprises selecting the first visual representation in the second region by positioning a cursor over the first visual representation and moving the cursor, after selecting the first visual representation, to the second position. Computer systems of the present invention and software stored on computer readable storage media of the present invention are also described.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 shows an example of several client computer systems coupled to the Internet, and a server computer system with a picture database or a database of other digital media according to one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 shows an example of a computer system which may be used with the present invention.

FIG. 3 is a flowchart illustrating one method for creating a picture album according to one aspect of the present invention.

FIG. 4 is a flowchart illustrating one example of a method of creating a picture album according to one aspect of the present invention.

FIG. 5 shows a generalized window for an album authoring software according to one aspect of the present invention.

FIG. 6 shows an example of a computer readable storage medium for a client computer system which may be used with one aspect of the present invention.

FIG. 7 illustrates a computer readable storage medium for a server computer system which may be used with one aspect of the present invention.

FIGS. 8A, 8B, and 8C illustrate a particular graphical user interface which depicts the various information which may be maintained in a picture database according to one aspect of the present invention.

FIG. 9 is a flowchart depicting one example of a method of creating a picture album automatically from the search results of a search through a picture database.

FIGS. 10A, 10B, and 10C illustrate a particular graphical user interface which indicates the various parameters which may be specified in a search query which may be used in a method such as that illustrated in FIG. 9.

FIG. 11 shows one example of a window displaying the search results after a search which may be performed according to the method shown in FIG. 9.

FIGS. 12A, 12B, 12C, 12D, 12E and 12F show various aspects of a graphical user interface of an album authoring software according to one aspect of the present invention.